

February 15, 2005

Ms. Francine Torres, Administrator
USDA-AMS-TMP-NOP
1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 4008-So, AG Stop 0268
Washington, D.C. 20250-0200

RE: Support of National Organic Standards Board pasturing recommendations

Dear Ms. Torres,

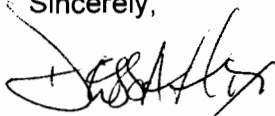
I am writing to let you know that I strongly support the pasturing recommendations of the NOSB. As a mother it is very important to me to be able to believe that the USDA organic seal on a food item means that the animals that produced the food were treated humanely. This includes allowing and encouraging animals to live and grow according to their natural behavior patterns.

Providing cows access to pasture assures that organic principles are being met, with an interrelated system between the animals and the land, working from the soil up to promote an interdependent community. Pasture provides benefits to cows that include improved foot and leg strength, reduced breeding problems, less stress, lower culling rates, and enhanced immunity.

For these reasons, I would like to support the Livestock Committee's recommendation that grazed feed must provide a significant portion of the total feed requirements. I firmly believe that lactation of dairy animals is not a stage of production under which animals may be denied pasture for grazing. I would like to see these recommendations be incorporated into the standards as mandated production practice.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Dessa Hix, MBA
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Cookeville TN 38506